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*This message  
is dedicated to the  
men and women who are  
unselfishly giving  
of themselves that all of us  
may continue to enjoy  
the privileges of Liberty and  
the Democratic way of Life  
and to help all oppressed peoples  
of the earth to enjoy  
similar advantages.*



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# STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

*One of a series of lesson-discussions on*

**SELF-ADVANCEMENT**



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*by*  
**J. A. ROSENKRANZ**

*President of*  
**NATIONAL SCHOOLS • LOS ANGELES**



*All intelligent men and women know from experience that in order to succeed, in any undertaking, we must put our heart and soul into our work.*

*Many things considered hopeless,  
and even impossible,  
are mastered by Determination  
and Intelligent Effort*

**A**N OLD LADY, while walking along a country lane, saw, some little distance ahead of her, a small group of boys near a board fence. As she hobbled along, she noted that, at intervals, one of the group would draw off, get set, run toward the fence as if to jump over it, but would give up at the critical moment. This routine was repeated by each member of the group, always with the same result: no matter how much effort he seemed to make, each boy, after a little jump, landed on the same side of the fence from which he started.

When she came alongside of the boys, the old lady stopped, and leaning upon her cane, said:

"Why don't you jump it?"

"We are trying, but we don't seem to make it," one of the boys replied.

The old lady looked at them for a moment, a kindly smile creeping over her face. Then she turned to speak directly to the boy who was getting ready to run at the fence, and said:

"If you are going to succeed at jumping a fence, or at anything else in your life, you've got to do more than try; you've got to be in earnest from start to finish."

"But I can't really jump it; you can see it's too high," the boy replied.

"You just throw your heart over that fence, and your body will follow fast enough," the old lady said as she trudged off on her way.

The boys stood and watched her as she walked along. Maybe they understood what she had said, and maybe not, but they had received an invaluable lesson to ponder.

When we put strong feeling, heart and soul, into whatever we are doing, whatever we are determined to achieve—then, all other "interests," obstacles and handicaps will disappear, and sooner or later we will reach our goal.

In everything that we do, if we are to achieve the results we hope for—

We must be sincere

We must mean business

We must be *determined* to win

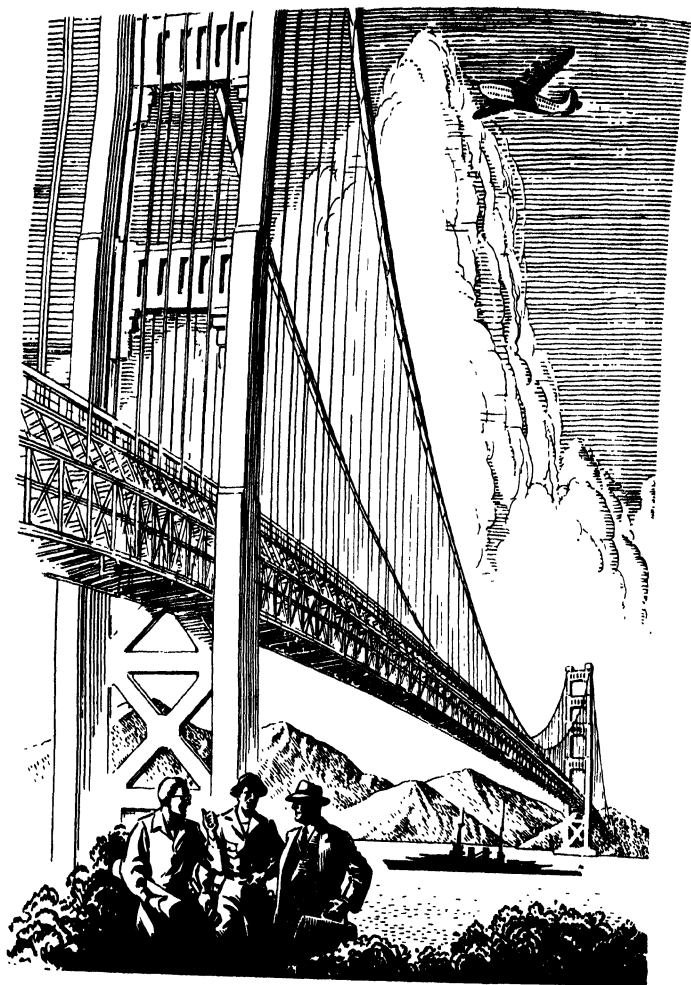
How many of us ever stop to realize that when we are *determined*, when our heart is in our task, we actually possess greater power to do what we want to do than when we approach our daily lives in a lackadaisical, lukewarm, "don't care" manner?

Then, let us compare the results from such an experience with those from the ordinary, slightly disinterested type of effort. There is a difference, isn't there? Half-hearted effort always brings half-hearted results, never more.

Whether the project be on gigantic scale or small, heart-interest, *determination*, is the vital motive power. It takes *determination* to complete successfully a project like the Panama Canal, the Boulder Dam, the Golden Gate Bridge; it takes *determination* just as certainly to conduct a home, office or factory successfully, or to advance on the job, or to finish a course of training. It requires this heart-interest, this *determination*, in some degree, to carry any undertaking through successfully, from beginning to end; and this constructive *determination* is the expression of true *strength of character*.

If we, ourselves, are success conscious, or, in other words are *determined*, others are slower to say, "No—" to our desires and requests. Those with whom we are dealing see that we are in earnest, that we "mean business" — and unless they have some solid, well-supported objections, they will act in line with our desires. If we are *determined* to live worth-while lives, to grow and to develop, and to reach the topmost position of which we are capable — *we will succeed*. It is only when our heart-interest fades out that our *determination* weakens and we falter on the way.





*For years engineers maintained that it was impossible to build a bridge across the Golden Gate; nevertheless, there it stands today, spanning more than a mile of wind swept ocean, a magnificent tribute to man's inherent power over difficulties.*

*When others tell you it can't be done . . .  
that is your cue to go ahead and do it.*

Dominant *determination* must spring from success awareness, which is the inner faith that all of our efforts are leading to success in the achievement of our goal. This *determination*, arising from optimistic faith, or perception, acts as a spur to strengthen and bring into more effective use the other powers of mind that are necessary in Self-Advancement.

For example, the man who is *determined* to succeed in his vocation, be that vocation what it may, will because of his *determination*, or constant awareness of success, be inspired to use *vision* in making his plans; he will approach his task with a *constructive attitude*; he will use *initiative* in putting his plans into *action*; he will almost automatically *persevere* in his efforts; he will *concentrate* upon what he is doing; he will, in short, find and do whatever is necessary to bring his goal closer to him.

Those fortunate men and women who put feeling, or what we call heart-interest, into each task, and thus arouse that dominant *determination* which forges ever ahead—are the *doers*, the *builders*, the *accomplishers*. In their personal lives they are successful, and, in a larger sense, whatever progress civilization has made, or will make, is due to their dynamic influence. They really live; the others, those who dream of success, but never become quite aware of it as a possibility for them, are merely tinkering with their opportunities.

Many things considered hopeless and even impossible are mastered by *determination* and *intelligent effort*.

That thought expresses the theme of this lesson discussion. Let us all commit it to memory. Let us study it, analyze it, reflect upon it. What greater incentive as to the worth-whileness of our efforts could we seek than the realization, that:

Even undertakings that are regarded as hopeless, impossible, are mastered by *determination* and *intelligent effort*.

If the seemingly impossible can be accomplished by the exercise of heart-interest, or *determination*, how greatly we can strengthen character, and what a really tremendous improvement we can make in our circumstances by applying *determination* to the comparatively simple duties that make up our daily activities.

Within each one of us, tremendous forces are indeed waiting to be put to work. The almost unbelievable power of these forces is unquestioned; yet, to many of us the way to reach this power is an undiscovered secret, an unsolved mystery. It shall be our purpose, in this discussion, to brush away these cobwebs, these imaginary obstacles—and to demonstrate, from real life, how strength of character can be developed until our every act reflects purposeful *determination*.

In the last analysis, according to our viewpoint, it is not so much a question of developing strength of character as it is of learning to use it. We all possess

it, but in too many of us it is static rather than dynamic—and to make it dynamic is our objective. Exactly what do we mean when we say that strength of character is static? We mean that our own distinctive moral qualities are not being properly or fully expressed in our daily lives. Thus, expression, or use of the powers we possess, is the key to development. Our task, then, is to learn to use those powers which we have forgotten through lack of use.

We cannot see strength of character, or success consciousness or determination, or touch them, in the ordinary way; but, we can most positively observe and study the lives of those who are and who have been harmoniously in tune with these creative principles.

Life is the greatest university of all. It is from life that we learn the most valuable lessons. If we are observant and alert, we see that others, by their experiences, give warning of failure on the one hand, and point the way to success on the other. If we are wise, the more we analyze what *strength of character*, generating *determination* and creating *success awareness* has meant in the lives of others, the more do we become inspired to live the fuller, the more successful life.

For example, who is there among us that can not be immensely profited by the knowledge that one of our fellowmen who was very near-sighted and had great difficulty in reading, rose to the topmost pinnacle of a profession which demands the close, constant use of

the eyes, a profession which even the average man in full possession of his faculties would not attempt. When we study an experience of this kind, is it not inspiring to realize, that:

**WHAT MAN HAS DONE,  
YOU AND I CAN DO!**

There was commotion and excitement one night at the Opera House in Rio de Janiero, when the musical director suddenly left without notice. The manager literally pulled his hair. Where, at this late hour, could another conductor be found? A few of the musicians scurried back stage to offer a meek suggestion: in the

*Isn't the career of  
Arturo Toscanini a liv-  
ing example of the fact  
that if we really are  
prepared our opportu-  
nity is bound to come?*



orchestra was a young cellist, Arturo Toscanini by name, who had many times proved that he knew the music of the operas remarkably well. Why not call upon him to conduct?

In despair the manager accepted the plan. So, a rather nervous young man, wearing an evening suit far too large for him, leaped upon the conductor's stand, rapped his stick sharply, lifted his baton, and without opening the score in front of him, started the opera.

After that performance, the young conductor was called upon to direct no less than eighteen operas, and to the speechless amazement of both musicians and audiences, *never once did he touch a score.*

When *his* time came, Toscanini was ready. He was ready, because long, long before, in hours of *determined* study, he had prepared himself. He had created the plan, the purpose — and those constructive habits, brought out, enabled him to use his *strength of character.*

Excuses? He had much more legitimate excuse for quitting than has the average man. Toscanini's task approached the "impossible." His undertaking was made more than usually difficult by the fact that he was extremely near-sighted. This, of course, is a particularly severe handicap to a musician, and especially to an operatic conductor, who must cast many a swift glance at the score; but such is the power of *determination* that it actually overcomes obstacles — and makes them disappear as completely as if they never existed.

By putting his heart and soul into his objective, Toscanini developed the ability to *memorize* hundreds of musical scores. Thus, his success is directly the result of strength of character expressed in *determination* to achieve his purpose, in spite of his handicap.

The way to develop *strength of character* is to use the *strength of character* we possess, in sincere, planned, determined action; through constant, habitual use our talents and abilities are lifted out of the dormant sleep into dynamic, productive life.

In the experience of one successful person after another, regardless of race or creed, we find the influence of *strength of character* providing the endurance, the enthusiasm and the optimism necessary to carry plans to completion.

It is our sincere hope that the inspiring examples here given will serve a two-fold purpose: (1) To prompt us to use, in our own lives, the constructive principles which have brought success to others; (2) To encourage us to look for other similar illustrations of these principles in the successful lives of our associates, relatives, friends and fellow workers. We will find revealing truths in the most unexpected places, if we are only sympathetic, observant and eager to learn. When we remove self-interest, self-worship, selfishness from the center of our attention, and interest ourselves in others, undreamed of new interests and opportunities will open up before us. For us, too, success lies along the road that successful men and women have traveled,

for centuries. Does that lesson seem simple? Indeed, it is; but, perhaps because of its very simplicity it has been unfortunately overlooked by most of us. We deliberately make life hard. We make such an effort to be complex, difficult, involved. We struggle to learn that which we already know, if we will but open our minds to it.

We must not play with life. We must not tinker with our ambitions. Once we have decided upon a certain course of action, have visualized the possibilities and have initiated the first step—then, we must go straight ahead, propelled by dominant *determination* to finish the job successfully.





Now, let us be very practical in this discussion. Let us keep our feet on the ground. It is one thing to read about *strength of character*, but it is something quite different actually to use this principle in our daily lives. We are primarily interested in results. Although we must read and re-read this discussion in order to understand the message it contains, unless we *use* the principles here set forth, we will miss the benefits they hold for us.

In our experiences, at home and at work, we come in contact with men and women who show *strength of character* in everything that they do. Every time they undertake anything, from mowing the lawn to building a bridge — no matter how large or how small the enterprise — they go at it with quiet purposefulness, aware of final success at every step, and determined to see the undertaking through. We say of persons of this type: "He knows what he wants and goes after it." The question is, of course, how can we put this same creative purposefulness to work for us?

Now, we have all seen times, in our own lives, when inherent *strength of character* filled us with determination. At such times, we surprised ourselves, as well as our friends and associates, by our purposefulness; but, most of us let go, and slide back too soon into half-hearted, detached effort.

It is clear, then, that if we are really to be successful we must keep our positive and determined attitude more constant, and not allow it to fluctuate to such

extremes, up in the clouds, then down in the pit.

To hold the positive and *determined* attitude in control, we *must*:

First, thoroughly understand the principles involved;

Second, use these principles to make the change or improvement we desire;

Third, realize that mental functions, like physical, require constant exercise for their most effective development.

Thus, we take one step today, two tomorrow, three the next day — and eventually we possess the strength to run and to leap.

Strength of character, as used in this discussion, is distinctive character, or individuality clearly showing a keen susceptibility to all the finer, more creative and more constructive instincts of life. We all have it; but far too many of us let it shrivel and die through disuse.

A constructive *plan* aimed at the accomplishment of a worth-while *objective* and accompanied by the *determination* to carry that plan into practical operation is a pattern which gives unquestioned evidence of active strength of character.

Now, constructive *determination*, which is the active agent of strength of character, requires a little further explanation at this point, to help us to harmonious agreement.

To be *determined* does not mean to set a frown upon the forehead, to roll up the sleeves — and to charge at life like a blind and obstinate bull. The unfortunate part of it is, however, that so many of us mistake this stubborn obstinacy, this unreasonable bulldog tenacity, for real *determination*.

There is an important difference.

The stubborn man is self-willed, selfish, arbitrary and unreasonable. The truly *determined* man, whose determination springs from strength of character, maintains an open mind. He seeks knowledge, information and all constructive principles that will further him in his ambition. He is even *more* considerate of others, more deeply imbued with a sense of service than either the foolish man who does not care and allows himself to be turned from his path by every wind that blows — or the stubborn man who thinks only of himself.

The constructively *determined* man lives according to constructive principles, which embody tolerance, open-mindedness, understanding and appreciation of the other man's viewpoint. He realizes the importance of cooperation; through his very strength of character he becomes aware that as we serve others, we serve ourselves. In a word, in that way we learn the difference between right and wrong, between negative and positive, between destructive and productive. It is this knowledge that brings our strength of character to life — and that generates determination — cool, deliberate, open-minded and persistent as Time.

The contrast between the slipshod and the purposeful approach to life is again illustrated by two examples. It is interesting to note that *determination* is the ingredient that makes the difference.

Suppose we had been sitting in a chair at home for a half-hour or so, reading the newspaper, thumbing through several magazines, just "killing" time. Then, bored, we arose from our chair. We strolled about, wandered from one room to another, picked up a glass, ran a little water into it and drank; then, wandered back to our chair, picked up the funny paper and sat down again.

Is that not about the way many men and women conduct their lives? They do the things which arise in the course of aimless wanderings, without plan or purpose. They need an income in order to live; and they



must have a job to secure the income; so, instead of planning and preparing for the job that will best fit them, and working toward it, step by step—they drift, of necessity, into any place that comes along. Then, they drift into one job after another without ever having realized that a little more vision, a little more planning, the acquisition of a little more information, would have enabled them to express some choice in the matter. It happens thus, not only in our vocational experiences, but in every phase of our lives.

Like a tonic, purpose relieves the boring do-nothingness of the scene, and supplants it with the thrill of living. Let us see if this is not true.

Suppose now that we had been sitting in a chair at home for a half-hour or so, but this time we were reading the newspaper and magazines while waiting for a letter, which would tell us that we had been accepted for a position that we wanted very much.

There is definite purpose here:

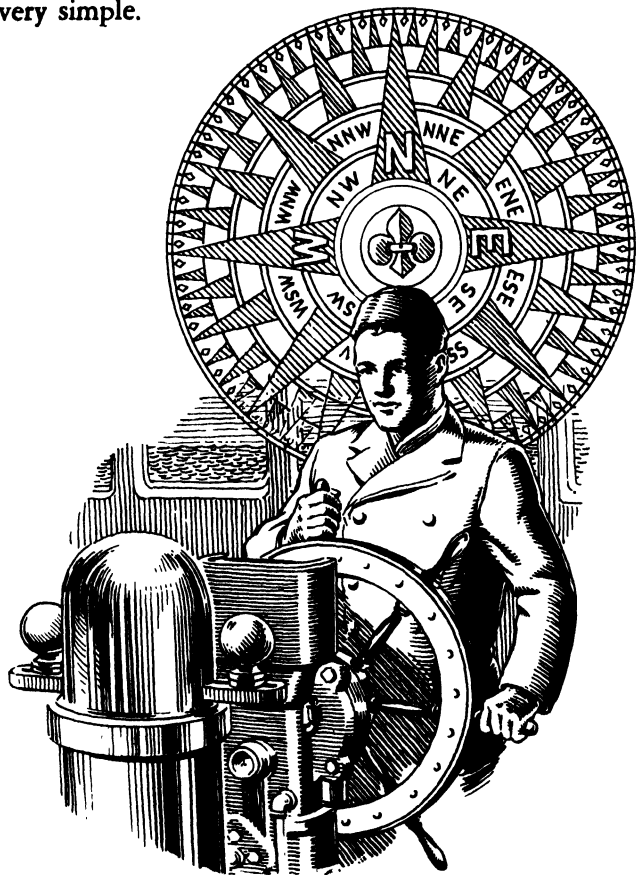
Waiting for the postman.

Waiting for something specific.

Then, suddenly we heard the postman's whistle. What would we do? In a flash, we would drop what we were reading. We would get up from our chair as quickly as possible — and without the least aimless wandering, *we would go out and get that letter!* If someone in the house called to us, without waiting to learn what that someone wanted, we would cry, "Wait just a minute." If the door were locked, and we had

no key, and feared the postman might take that letter back to the post office, we would go out the rear door and run around the house. The more that letter meant to us, the more we wanted it, the greater the obstacle would have to be to keep us from getting it.

That's true, isn't it? — and why? The answer is very simple.



In the first instance we had no purpose, important or otherwise. We had no conscious desire, nothing but a little half-hearted relief from sitting too long. In the second instance we had a definite, result-getting *determination*, because in this case there was something important at stake, something with far-reaching consequences to be accomplished.

Thus, we learn that what the compass is to the navigator, aim and purpose are to the man who is seriously interested in self-advancement. Without a compass the navigator is in danger of losing his course over the sea; without a definite, worth-while, uplifting purpose, we are in danger of being drifted aimlessly and hopelessly by the currents and cross-currents of life.

Purposeless individuals are useless and even harmful. They are useless, because they are wasting their time and opportunity. They are harmful, because they often obstruct the usefulness of others; they are a destructive element, and quite often exert a demoralizing influence upon those with whom they come in contact.

Fortunate indeed are those of us who realize, early in life, that:

Without a definite purpose expressed in interesting and worth-while work, yesterday was meaningless, today contains no satisfaction, and tomorrow may bring us neither joy nor achievement.

Let us build a sense of purpose around our lives, around our daily activities. In each separate undertaking, with purpose before us in its full importance, let us go after accomplishment with *determination*.

If one is a mechanic, a technician or a craftsman with a difficult assignment before him, he should not look at it as just another job. Instead, he should regard it with purpose, as a challenge to his skill, as an opportunity for self-advancement — then, he should *determine* to win like a champion.



***Because he regarded each task as a challenge, Benvenuto Cellini, the Florentine craftsman, became a renowned artist.***



If one is a salesman, he should first make sure that the product he sells serves a useful purpose. Then, when he goes out to call on a prospective customer, he should be aware that he *is* rendering a service, and should keep his objective — to secure an order — uppermost in his mind. He should constantly realize that this order will mean compensation, achievement, advancement to him — and convenience, comfort or some other worth-while advantage to his customer. Then, let him *determine* to give the best that is in him to succeed.

If one is a housewife, responsible for a well organized, smoothly running, inspiring household, consciously directed purpose and *determination* will bring new power and capacity into the entire family circle.

If one is a student in school, he must not regard his duties as evidence of the teacher's love of asking questions. Let him try to see the complete purpose behind his labors; let him realize how much better off he will be when he is trained, or educated, and fills all of his efforts with *determination* to succeed.

No matter what niche we may be filling in life at the moment, we can build purpose into it, and by *determination* to succeed in that purpose, we will call our native *strength of character* into play, and automatically prepare ourselves for the next step ahead!

We must have a life, or career plan, to serve as a pattern for our activities. If we do not feel that we have such a plan at the moment, then, our first step is

to make one. We must build purpose, or plan, into every undertaking related, in some degree, to that plan. A force must have something to work upon. The man who fails to harness his purpose to *determination* is like a windstorm in the desert, spending itself on space.

We want many things, some at present remote, and others nearer our reach. Let us select one of these things we want that is not too far removed from our sphere of possibilities. Next, let us build a plan, the purpose of which is to get this want, or objective. With this done, let us check our want, or objective, or desire. Let us ask ourselves the following questions, and other similar ones which these suggest:

Is this want constructive?

Is it useful?

Is it important?

What will I do with it, and what will it do for me and for others?

Do I really want it seriously enough to concentrate upon its attainment regardless of apparent obstacles?

In this way, we create both Plan and Purpose. We take our desires and our "intentions" out of the static realm of vague wishes, and make them real and concrete. When we feel that we have developed a stimulating purpose, backed by some sort of plan, then we must get action to work on our plan in the best way that is available to us at the moment. We must plan

first, then we must get *determined* action behind our plan. This is the surest way to make our dreams of success come true.

Naturally, there will be times when we will wonder if we are on the right track. Such experience occurs in almost every new undertaking. Is there not some guide rule we can apply at least to indicate that we are headed in the right direction? Of course there is — and the test is a comparatively simple one. All we need to do is sincerely ask ourselves:

**Does the undertaking, or task, or the project  
attract and hold our interest?**

**Are we showing definite progress?**

If the honest answer to these two direct questions is "No," then something is wrong, which should be corrected as quickly as possible. If the answer is "Yes," we may be reasonably confident that we are headed in the right direction. Let us keep on trying and the time will come when we will automatically express the result-getting *strength of character* which is our natural inheritance.

Once we get into the spirit of creative, productive self-advancement, we will find that every step clears the way for the next one. The world contains many men and women who reached the goals they set themselves:

How did they do it?

What sort of handicaps did they overcome?

What special opportunities were theirs?

What were their obstacles?

Were any of them ever in circumstances similar to ours?

Let us again call to mind that through studying these and many other aspects of the experiences of those who have effectively used these principles before us, we can most efficiently formulate an accurate, practical, interesting and productive guide for ourselves.

Fortunate indeed is he who can learn from the experiences of others; and thrice fortunate is he who is *determined* to lead a useful life — of benefit to himself and to his fellowmen. His constantly unfolding *strength of character* will be reflected in his every act, and will give to his personality a magnetism persuasive in its own right.

The following illustration clearly demonstrates the thought we are trying to convey:

Lester Pfister was a farmer, a poor farmer. To a man of less vision, his start would have been considered inglorious indeed, under-privileged, with even an element of despair about it; but Pfister saw nothing but opportunity before him. By his own *strength of character*, he changed his surroundings and his circumstances, because he had the vision to plan and the

*determination* to see his plan through. Not only did he achieve his own goal, he also conferred a lasting benefit upon his fellowmen, and placed his name high on the honor roles of achievement in modern agriculture.

Pfister's plan, simply expressed, was to grow larger, healthier corn than had ever been produced. In order to achieve the goal around which his plan was created, he did not indulge in wishful thinking, day-dreaming, or making opportunist jumps from one project to any other that *seemed* to promise easier or quicker returns. Pfister knew what he wanted: he was *determined* to grow improved corn, this year, next year, or the year after that; but, sooner or later, grow it he would. He started right at his own doorstep, doing that which was nearest to him to do in furtherance of his plan. In a word, to his existing knowledge of farming he added through study of all the information he could possibly gather. Then, he began to test the knowledge he had acquired by putting it into practice, in very limited research at first, then in larger and larger experiments as his knowledge increased.

It was well for Lester Pfister that his native strength of character was awake and on the job to nourish and guide his *determination*; otherwise, he must surely have succumbed to the discouragements which badgered him continually.

***Lester Pfister proved that success and distinction are to be found in agriculture as well as in any other kind of human endeavor.***



Each of his innumerable experiments took many months to complete. This time factor added to the air of uncertainty of results, and called for almost constant application of larger and larger doses of faith. In the meantime, Pfister had to endure ridicule, failure, threats of foreclosure, poverty and humiliation; but he had the *strength of character* to measure up to the test that Life required him to pass before the door to his cherished goal would be opened.

Thousands of us are daily "quitting" our undertakings, the projects we have been dreaming about, the things that we hoped to achieve. Why? Simply because, while we envision our possibilities, we do not exercise the strength of character to generate sufficient *determination* to carry us through.

Lester Pfister, on the other hand, luckily for him, *had* the strength of character to generate sufficient *determination* to carry him through to the realization of the possibilities he envisioned. He did not give up; he did not swerve from his line of attack. After enduring the struggle and hardship for several years, he harvested the first crop of his new and superior corn. That season he sold seed-corn to the amount of \$35,000. The following year he realized \$150,000. He had produced a seed that outyielded any in his county by from 6 to 35 bushels an acre. He was repaid a hundred times over for every moment of effort he expended. Plan and purpose backed by strength of character had transformed a drab toiler into an important contributor to

this world's riches. What an enviable *service* Pfister rendered to himself and to the common cause of *all* men.

One of the primary characteristics of man is that he is the only creature in all the world who is endowed with the capacity to improve himself and his condition, through his own efforts. This inherent potentiality for *self*-advancement is our unique endowment, as men and women. It constantly invites us to take what we have, talent, ability, opportunity, and starting from where we are, to expand our usefulness to the maximum degree.

We may feel that our efforts are unimportant, or that the goal is *too* far removed; therefore, we make no effort. These are negative and harmful viewpoints; no constructive effort is wasted. Each effort, no matter how seemingly obscure, has its part in building toward the final objective. To help us remember this truth, let us keep burning in our minds the fact that practically all great achievements are the outgrowth of extremely modest beginnings.

Conscious reliance upon our own basic strength of character will create the faith that is needed to spur *determination*. For what are we waiting? — Proof? The proof is all around us. The greatest lesson of all is being demonstrated again and again, literally before our eyes.

Perhaps no one can estimate the actual importance of the X-ray to the human race. Doctors, dentists, diag-



nosticians base much of their technique in saving and prolonging life upon the evidence this "machine" alone uncovers. It is used in industry, too: to check materials, to bring to light, *before* production, weaknesses and flaws hidden from all ordinary inspection methods — and the beneficial use of X-ray is constantly increasing.

Is it not an inspiration to realize that we owe this beneficial servant of mankind to the vision and the strength of character of a young man who was determined to make something worth-while out of his life? Today, we can thank William David Coolidge for the presence of the X-ray machine in our hospitals, clinics, research and experimental laboratories — and wherever else it contributes to the store of human knowledge and human welfare.

Just to read about young Coolidge's development is an inspiration, but we, in our effort to advance ourselves, are interested in specific information that we can use in our own careers. We want to know what were the controllable factors that brought out his native ability, and that led him to widely useful achievement.

The first fact we learn about him is that nothing was handed to young William Coolidge on a silver platter. He had to work, struggle and plan to get an education, and being *determined* to succeed, he got that education. His strength of character is revealed in the fact that he was willing to make any effort, any sacrifice necessary to learn. His meagre financial circumstances

were to him, not a limitation, but a challenge. Eventually, he managed to secure a job with a concern, a part of whose business was industrial research and experiment. The very nature of the work of the company enabled young Coolidge to further his advancement. Here he became interested in the X-ray.

For a man with less *determination*, it would have been hard going, but William Coolidge didn't mind. He brought to the task the same *strength of character* and determined effort that had made his education possible. He made endless experiments, but nothing came of them. Scientists inspected his work. They said he would never develop anything, and advised him to give it up and try something more practical.

The important point, to us, as students of self-advancement is that despite the criticism, the discouragements and all other obstacles — of which he had more than his share — William Coolidge kept on with undiminished faith in his final success.

**THAT** is strength of character supported by constructive DETERMINED effort.

**THAT** is the spirit responsible for nine-tenths of human progress.

**THAT** is high moral excellence applied directly to the practical problems of life.

At last, when to the average man it would seem that human patience could put forth no further effort, just then, Coolidge made a discovery which led to the development of the Coolidge X-ray tube, which in turn made X-rays practical.

*Determination* to succeed supported by the strength of character to hold *determination* firm is the propelling force of this very outstanding career. Of course, William Coolidge was rewarded, honored and all the rest; but the greatest tribute to him is the tribute of the men and women whose lives have been saved because he had the strength of character to see his chosen task through to the end.

We are quick to cry, "genius" — when one of our kind accomplishes something out of the ordinary, as if the presence of genius in him excused us from bestirring ourselves to greater effort; but, we forget that genius is more often than not merely the strength of character to try and to keep on trying — along a well-planned and constructive line.

The mistake we make is in bestowing the title of genius so generously. The other fellow is not necessarily a genius, regardless of how much he can do. We'd be surprised at what we could do, too, if we would only try a little harder.

We should fill our hearts and our souls — our whole being — with the great truth that we too can be successful. When we do actually understand this significant fact, then and only then will there be fewer "geniuses" and more men of service and accomplishment among us.

We *all* have talents and abilities. We all can grow and play a constructive part. Each of us should, and if we are to be successful, must, follow the goal which interests us personally. Thus, according to interest, the goal, the aim, or the objective varies from person to person. The basic principles in the method of attaining the goal — any goal — are relatively the same for all. In other words, *strength of character* enforcing sustained and determined action is essential in the realization of any and all worth-while objectives.

As a result of our traditional way of thinking we have come to regard obstacles of all kinds, real or imaginary, as barriers to accomplishment; yet, when we stop to reflect, we realize that this viewpoint is not correct.

Living men and women are constantly showing us, by their own actual achievements, that poor health, financial limitation, lack of previous education, old age — none of these conventional bugaboos is a "stopper" to the one who consistently expresses his strength of character in constructive *determination*.

Here is an inspiring example of the fact that the *determined* spirit will not be denied. Adeline de Walt Reynolds was a grandmother, 72 years of age, when she secured her master's degree from college. All her life long, she wanted to be an actress, but circumstances forced her to delay the fulfillment of this ambition.

The manner in which she kept her purpose alive, for many years, and achieved success in other fields in the meantime, is both an inspiration and an example for every one of us. It is a tribute to the capacity of the human being. It shows, with especial clearness, just what can be done by the one who has the *strength of character* to make the utmost of his life regardless of limitations.

When she was 40 years of age, Mrs. Reynolds lost her husband, and she was left with four children to support. In middle life, she took up stenography, and earned a living by this means for a number of years. She was 66 years of age when her youngest daughter completed her education. "Now," Mrs. Reynolds announced, "It is my turn to go to college."

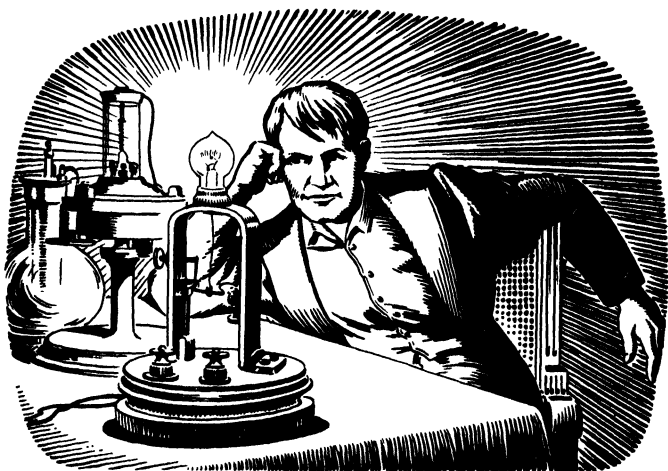
She earned her expenses typing for students, and graduated with a master's degree when she was 72 years old, a grandmother several times over. In spite of the worth-while accomplishments of her life, which would have more than satisfied a less determined person, the indomitable Mrs. Reynolds still clung to her original purpose. She was *determined* to reach her goal, to become an actress. She "crashed" the movies at the age of 80, has appeared with many famous stars in important pictures, and is still going strong.

Success as a stenographer was not, to her, an end in itself, but was merely the stepping stone to further self-advancement. What an answer her example is to those who say: "I would like to do something worth-

while, but I cannot, because —.” Do we possess the ambition, the desire Mrs. Reynolds does? Then, let us follow her example and strive for the *balanced* life she has shown to be so productive of results. All through her struggle, regardless of circumstances, she had the one thought: to some day become an actress. In her case, that day was at the advanced age of 80 years.

To the man or woman who has dug deep into the reservoir of his or her own strength of character, there is no such thing as defeat! Each so-called failure is merely a temporary delay.

Thomas Edison made 3000 experiments to develop the first working model of the incandescent lamp — and only two of them worked. What a difference to him, and to all of us, if he had stopped in discouragement after the first 1000 trials.”



The essential value of the examples we have given in this discussion is that they are records of the actual experiences of flesh-and-blood men and women like we are. These persons are not super-this, or super-that; for the most part they are just human beings who worked, struggled, sacrificed and *did not give up!* Too often, when a person becomes outstanding in his field, we allow ourselves to become overawed by his success, and tend to ignore the sacrifices he endured and the struggle he made to achieve his goal. The *success* makes his accomplishment appear beyond us; but the *struggle* shows that he is much the same as we are, and in addition had handicaps which — in most instances — make our problems seem trivial indeed.

Most of us are too quick to let every little obstacle fill us with discouragement. We keep our strength of character locked away, unused, even forgotten. We do not think of drawing upon it as a source of that *determination* without which all accomplishment is mere chance. The ridiculous part of it all is that many a man gives up, stops trying — just at the time when a few more bold strokes would mean success — he quits on the eve of victory.

Then, others of us hurt ourselves by insisting upon going to extremes. Either we will do what we want to do, and do it now, or we will do nothing at all. A proper *sense of balance* cautions us to avoid extremes, and to choose the middle path. For example, in bringing new *determination* into our lives we must not get

all tense about it, and push and strain, worry and fret. Balanced *determination*, as generated by *strength of character*, is calm, reasoned, patient and persistent; it drives toward a goal, but the drive is steady and consistent, and at the beginning foresees delays, long or short, along the way.

Extremes waste power; balance creates more power! This is true on the side of too little as well as on that of too much. One can be much more effectively and permanently *determined* in a calm, relaxed manner, than when keyed up to the pitch of hysterical nervous tension.

Above all let us realize that whatever our problems may be, we *can* master them more quickly and easily by facing them with *determination* supported by strength of character. Let us learn that lesson once and for all, from the very inspiring real-life examples we come across in the contacts of our personal daily lives. If we sometimes feel that results are not coming fast enough, let us remember, that:

**MANY THINGS CONSIDERED HOPE-  
LESS AND EVEN IMPOSSIBLE ARE  
MASTERED BY DETERMINATION  
AND INTELLIGENT EFFORT!**

The life record of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, champion of humanity, one of the most inspired and inspiring leaders of all time, is the clearest testimony to the basic truth of this great principle that we could either ask or receive. He visualized and fought for a



better world for all the people, a world resting on a foundation of Justice and Peace. Strongly marked moral qualities influenced his every act. Underlying, deep-rooted strength of character is predominant throughout his career. His very name was the symbol of hope to all enslaved peoples, during the darkest period this world has yet endured.

When he entered public life, as a young man, the "old timers" scoffed at him; but he was not sensitive to their jeering. He knew his own mettle. He had a *vision* — and he was *determined*.

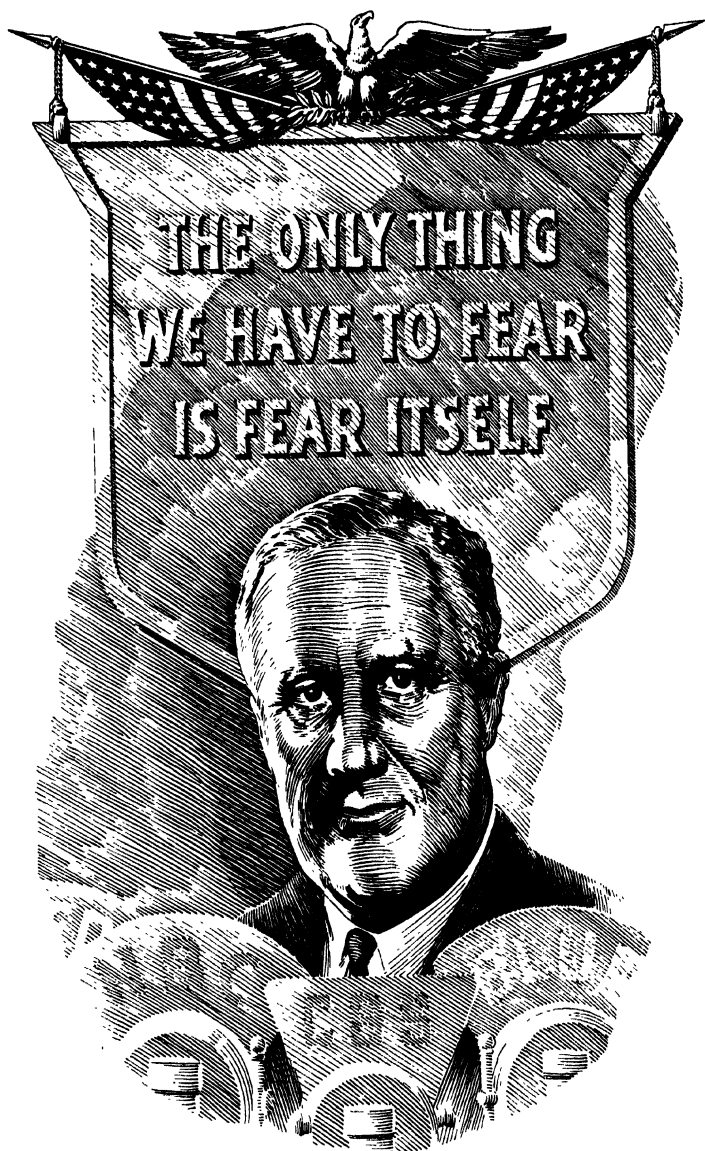
Of course he had his set-backs, discouraging ones, difficulties that would have retired a less *determined* man from the lists of contestants; but he came back after each delay, stronger, more self-assured.

His mission was an inspired one from the beginning, for he made the relieving of the ills of mankind his aim, his goal in life; and his *determination* to fulfill this goal led him to the hardest, the most responsible job in the world — the Presidency of the United States.

During the dark days of Depression, it was he, the leader, who encouraged and inspired us all, and not we him.



***Although his body was weak and broken, his warm heart and great mind have influenced the constructive thought and action of millions of men and women the world over. His great and determined spirit will live forever!***



During the blackest days of war, the days when there was doubt and trepidation in many of our hearts, it was he who, through his buoyant and *determined* spirit, caused us to regain our *faith* in ourselves and in our country.

His own strength of character was so abundant that its magnetism was transferred, not only to us, his countrymen, but even to the millions in the farthestmost points of the globe.

The unknowing prophets said that 50,000 airplanes a year was an impossibility; but like many another "impossibility" it was mastered by *determination* and *intelligent* effort.

Neither the struggle against internal difficulties which marked the early years of his Presidency, nor the war, which engulfed all other problems, curbed his enthusiasm or made him doubt for a moment what the outcome would be. He could see the sun through the smoke of battle, and he always believed that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

He has shown us, by his example, that when we fill our days with *determined* purpose, we have no time or room in our lives for fear, worry or anticipated difficulty.

If we will but put our hearts into everything that we undertake, then life is an opportunity for service and, through service, for personal growth and advancement.

Our *determination* will be whetted by the realization that he who aims high cannot fail to reach a point far in advance of that from which he started; and although the end attained may fall short of the intended aim, still, the very effort to reach a constructive goal will prove to be for our permanent benefit.

All that we seek is within ourselves, waiting for the signal that will call our own powers into expression. We can claim the creative life for our own whenever we are ready! Let us get set on the road toward a more useful and happier life — now! Not tomorrow, nor the day after, but TODAY!



**BALANCE GIVES US STRENGTH AND CHARACTER**

**M**AY difficulties teach us the need for redoubled effort; may defeat give us only greater strength to rise again and win again. May today's accomplishments inspire us to still greater achievements.

*Let us live and work together in harmony and helpfulness. Let us supplant greed, intolerance, prejudice and pessimism with friendliness, understanding and optimism.*

*In our own STRENGTH OF CHARACTER may we find the DETERMINATION to bring new meaning and new vigor to our efforts, for the benefit of ourselves and all whose lives we touch.*

*May we all of us, the highest and the most humble, achieve true happiness, and realize our innermost ambitions in SELF-ADVANCEMENT THROUGH SERVICE.*





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